

The Department of Environmental Quality and its employees would like to share these conservation tips that will help you save money and protect the environment. Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility and we should all chip in to do our part. By working together, we can make a difference.

## BE THE SOLUTION

### TECHNOLOGY: LONG HAUL

#### Use solar-powered chargers.

Energy stored from exposure to sunlight can recharge an average phone, MP3 player, digital camera or PDA once or twice. Besides being better for the environment, these devices free users to charge up from anywhere.

#### \$ Factor:

It's free to use the sun's energy, and devices such as the Solio Hybrid Solar Charger can be purchased for a small investment (about \$100).

#### Think green on computers.

When considering a computer brand and model, seek products created for reduced toxin use, that use recycled materials and that prioritize life-cycle management issues. The Energy Star symbol is an easy way to identify energy efficient products, but electricity isn't the only factor to consider. The Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool, or EPEAT, system rates particular computers on 23 criteria. Consumers can access the EPEAT product registry and purchase products with gold, silver and bronze certifications notes at Buy.com. Greenpeace International's Guide to Greener Electronics

ranks leading mobile and personal computer, or PC, manufacturers on their global policies and practice on eliminating harmful chemicals and on taking responsibility for products once consumers discard them.

#### \$ Factor:

While finding out which tech products harm the environment least can be difficult, the good news is that these products generally don't cost more. And with Energy Star computers using 70 percent less electricity than computers without that designation, equipment runs cooler and won't have to be replaced as often.

#### Go low on high-tech.

Skip the high-end capabilities on computers and monitors. Sure, features such as high-end video and sound, faster processors, more RAM and larger displays boost the entertainment value of the machine, but they also add up to higher energy consumption.

#### \$ Factor:

Live without these capabilities, and live with lower electric bills.

#### Buy small.

A "small form factor" or low-profile computer will usually consume less energy than a full-sized desktop or mini tower. And for the average user, the larger machines with expansion options, such as additional plug-in cards, aren't necessary.

#### \$ Factor:

A computer that's not as souped up will also be not as pricey.

### Go mobile for computing.

Notebook computers use less energy than desktops. Energy consumption determines how long a notebook's battery will last, so manufacturers have placed a high priority on energy-efficient displays and other features.

#### \$ Factor:

Comparing one 30-watt powerful notebook to a 120-watt desktop PC, the energy savings could be up to 80 percent, according to Energy Star. Although notebooks are often pricier, the lifetime energy savings can well make them more cost effective.

### Shop warranties on electronics.

Product repair is almost always better for the environment than product replacement, and a good warranty lessens the inconvenience of getting a device fixed. While manufacturers have made warranties less valuable to consumers in recent years, particularly by shortening their length, some brands do still offer decent policies on free warranties. Be sure to read the fine print and save any necessary packaging and registration information.

#### \$ Factor:

Utilizing a warranty can mean free or low-cost repair and may include shipping.



### Seek 'take-back' computers.

These programs allow used computers to be returned to the manufacturer or a designated company for recycling or donation to a charity, in exchange for credit. The incentive is helping to solve a major problem: The EPA estimates that only 12.5 percent of the 2.63 million tons of e-waste in 2005 was collected for recycling.

#### \$ Factor:

Two take-back program examples, according to the August 2007 Computer Take Back Campaign Report: Dell takes back any Dell product for free and HP charges for recycling but offers e-coupons for new HP product purchases that cover most or all of the recycling cost.

### Buy inkjet printers.

And choose remanufactured cartridges rather than virgin ones. Inkjets use 80 percent to 90 percent less energy than laser printers and often have excellent print quality.

#### \$ Factor:

The cost of ink adds up, but inkjets generally cost a lot less initially. Remanufactured cartridges are cheaper and refilling existing cartridges cuts costs further. Not only did an Epson-commissioned study find that as much as 60 percent of ink in a typical cartridge gets wasted when the printer claims it's out of ink, but ink refill kits can save a user up to 80 percent on ink costs. Inkjets are energy-wise, too, saving up to 90 percent on printer energy costs.

### Recycle electronics.

Be conscious of other electronics recycling methods that may be available. Some towns collect computer monitors and televisions for recycling through ongoing and one-day collections.

#### \$ Factor:

When shipping isn't a factor, recycling the computer is easier and the collections may be free.

### **Trade in electronics.**

Many manufacturers and retailers, including Best Buy and Circuit City, have partnerships with Deal-tree.com that allow customers to trade in working desktops, iPods, digital cameras, digital camcorders and other electronic devices for credit or gift cards.

### **\$ Factor:**

Visiting the trade-in site for a participating company, consumers can plug their device into a trade-in value calculator to find out its worth.

**Tips provided by: Bankrate.com and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality staff.**